

## International seminar: Turning hiking trails into successful tourism products

27 September in Barcelona is the place for you to be, if you would like to hear and discuss about what it takes to develop successful rural tourism products based on hiking trails in your destination. The Catalan Tourism Board is organizing this unique one day seminar together with its partners in the HikingEurope project, co-funded by the COSME programme of the European Union (*Please find more information about the HikingEurope project attached to this invitation*).

**Time:** 27/09/2016, 11:00-18:00

**Place:** Hotel Crowne Plaza Barcelona Fira Center, Avenida Rius i Tauler 1-3, 08004 Barcelona, Spain  
<http://www.crowneplazabarcelona.com/es>

The focus of the seminar will be to discuss and exchange best practices between the experts and the audience to find promising approaches in hiking tourism. The seminar addresses everybody interested in the topic: public authorities, destination management organizations, private tourism enterprises in rural regions, tour operators, NGOs and researchers etc.

### Programme

11:00	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> Octavi BONO, Director General of Tourism, Ministry of Business and Knowledge, Government of Catalonia
11:15	<b>Input 1: Need to focus on the customer!</b> <i>Market insights about European hiking and nature tourism</i> Ulf SONNTAG, NIT (Institute for Tourism Research), Germany
11:30	<b>Input 2: Need for sustainable hiking products and cooperation!</b> David BRÖDERBAUER, Nature Friends International, Austria
11:45	<b>Round Table 1: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT</b> <i>Sharing good and bad practices in product development regarding hiking related rural tourism; Identifying crucial factors of success/failure; Identifying key resources for a successful product; Price and competition.</i> Merixell OMELLA, El Brogit Guiatges, Priorat, Catalunya Barney MCLAUGHLIN, Donegal County, Ireland Gorana MARGARETIC, DUNEA, Dubrovnik, Croatia Hjörleifur FINNSSON, Icelandic Tourist Board Josep CAPELLÀ, DCB (Turisme i Desenvolupament local), Catalunya
13:30	Lunch break

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14:30	<b>Input 3: How hiking tourism businesses can better market and communicate their authenticity and sustainability, in order to be more competitive</b> Prof. Xavier FONT, University of Surrey, UK
14:45	<b>Round Table 2: COOPERATION</b> <i>Who are the public and private partners that need to team up for a successful hiking/rural tourism product? Top-down or bottom-up experiences? Who needs to do which key activities to be successful? Need to structure/formalize the cooperation?</i> Patrick TORRENT, Executive Director, Catalan Tourist Board Tom SELÄNNIEMI, The Finnish Nature Centre Haltia Eckard MANDLER, Wanderhotels, Austria Daniel PUNSETI, Camí de Ronda, Catalunya
16:15	coffee
16:30	<b>Round Table 3: COMMERCIALIZATION/DISTRIBUTION</b> <i>What are the best channels to inform about the product to the customer? Channel to sell? Online/Offline mix? Individual vs. organised travel? Need for packages? Role of the tour operators? What do the tour operators need from the stakeholders in the destinations?</i> Núria MARTÍ SIMÓ, PIRINEU eMOCIÓ, Catalunya David SERANO, La Balaguère, France Manfred HÄUPL, Hauser Exkursionen, Germany Riccardo SOLMI, Promappennino/ Trekkingitaly & Cyclingitaly, Italy
18:00	<b>Wrap-up and closing</b>

To attend the seminar, please register here: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/HikingEurope>. You will receive a confirmation e-mail shortly after your registration. Please be aware that there is a limit of 120 participants, registrations will be treated in a first-come first-serve manner. Participation in the seminar itself is free of charge, all travel costs have to be covered by the participants themselves.

We are looking forward seeing you in Barcelona in September.  
Best regards,



Ulf Sonntag (on behalf of the whole HikingEurope project team)

If you have questions, please contact Elsa Hufnagel at the Catalan Tourist Board,  
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## Project information HikingEurope

The HikingEurope project aims at promoting a transnational network of rural tourism routes. These will be structured around different itineraries of hiking trails around Europe to facilitate the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage of the involved territories.

The project is funded by the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises programme (COSME) of the European Commission.

HikingEurope will be implemented over a period of 18 months (starting in April 2016) in which a network of hiking trails of 1,170 kilometres across four different European countries will be created. The goal is offering visitors a wide range of walking trails to complement physical activity with the discovery of rural Europe: experiencing local traditions and tasting local cuisines, shopping in local markets, visiting museums or churches, discovering the local fauna, flora and hidden landscapes, etc. This tourist transnational product covers rural areas of Catalonia, Ireland, Italy and Croatia.

The product is meant to offer a unique experience and also to provide small and medium sized local businesses (accommodation, restaurants, travel agencies, markets, etc.) with the opportunity to provide services and products connecting foreign visitors with local reality.

Moreover, one of the axes of the project will focus on improving the competitiveness of the tourist companies by strengthening their professionalization skills in areas such as the use of new technologies, internationalization or the introduction of standards of sustainable tourism and accessibility.

HikingEurope foresees the creation of joint commercialization and promotion tools gathering the different European hiking trails into a single point and under a common brand, in order to foster its visibility in target markets. This pilot action will look for the commitment of other European regions sharing the values of the project and willing to join the network of the 4 pioneering regions.

The project, led from Catalonia by the Catalan Tourist Board, counts with the participation of several European partners like Pirineu Emoció (business partner), the University of Girona (academic partner), three regional partners: Regione Emilia-Romagna (Italy), the Regional Development Agency Dubrovnik-Neretva (Croatia) and the Region of Donegal (Ireland), as well as NIT, a German Research Institute, and NFI, an Austrian NGO specialized in nature and sustainability.